

Appendix H. Public Involvement

Scoping Summary Report: Deer Flat NWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan

July 15, 2010-March 31, 2012

H.1 Scoping Effort

Public involvement was sought in the early stages of development of the comprehensive conservation plan and environmental impact statement (CCP/EIS). Prior to beginning of public scoping, the Refuge created a Stakeholder Scoping Team to help identify people and organizations that would be interested in the CCP/EIS process. The team met in June 2010 and brainstormed organizations and individuals that could help provide information to the public about the CCP/EIS process and maximize public involvement, as well as outreach tools that could be used. Invitees to this team included representatives of the business, agricultural, hunting, recreation, conservation, and Hispanic communities.

Public involvement strategies included face-to-face meetings with community organizations, local, State, and Federal agencies, elected officials (or their aides), and Refuge users. To inform the broader public, invite discussion, and solicit feedback, the planning team also held open houses, provided a twice-a-month call-in line, and conducted weekly on-site field outreach. Field outreach included distributing pamphlets to visitors and engaging them in conversation regarding the CCP. The Refuge also maintained a website where CCP information could be found and where the public could print out comment forms or submit emails during the scoping phase. Below is a brief summary of the events, meetings, and outreach tools that were used in our scoping and public involvement efforts.

During the public scoping phase of the CCP, three issues appeared to be of most interest to Refuge stakeholders: surface water recreation, upland recreation, and hunting. Work sessions were created to continue discussion around these themes. Commenters with differing viewpoints and those that appeared willing to look for solutions to difficult issues, as well as local partners that had voiced interest in these themes, were invited to join these topic-based work sessions. The Refuge invited approximately 130 people (or their representatives) to attend the work sessions held from September 23 to September 25, 2010. Of those 130 invitees, 47 attended at least some part of the work sessions. Six members of the public also viewed the work sessions at some point during the three days. To view a summary of the work sessions, please visit the Deer Flat NWR Planning website at <http://www.fws.gov/deerflat/refugeplanning.html>.

H.1.1. Invitation to the Tribes

- May 27, 2010. Hard copy letters were mailed to Robert Bear, Tribal Chairman of Shoshone-Paiute Tribes; Alonzo Coby, Fort Hall Business Council (FHBC) Chairman of Shoshone-Bannock Tribes; and Samuel Penney, Chairman of the Nez Perce Tribe.
- May 12, 2011. Emails were sent to Robert Bear, Tribal Chairman of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes, Brooklyn Baptiste, Chairman of the Nez Perce Tribe, and Nathan Small, FHBC Chairman of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes to invite them to send a representative to the Extended Team Meetings.

- May 18, 2011. Received word from Brian Kelly and Meggan Laxalt-Mackay of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Ecological Services office that the Shoshone-Paiute only want to be consulted through the “Wings and Roots” program. Since this time, Brian Kelly has taken the lead on attempting to reinstate a consultation process with this tribe. Since they requested that they not be consulted outside of this formal program, no further direct contact was made with the tribe by the Ecological Services office. When the consultation process resumes, the Refuge will be a participant.
- May 25, 2011. Called and left messages for the chairmen of the Shoshone-Paiute, Shoshone-Bannock, and Nez Perce Tribes asking how they would like to be involved in the CCP process.
- September 20, 2011. Called and left messages for Nathan Small, FHBC Chairman of Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, and Brooklyn Baptiste, Chairman of the Nez Perce Tribe, asking them how they would like to be involved and letting them know that if there was no response by October 30, we would assume that they were not interested in participating in the process.
- August 29, 2011. Brian Kelly attempted to set up a consultation meeting with the Shoshone-Paiute for September 8, 2011. Unfortunately, the meeting never materialized.
- October 27, 2011. Attempted to contact the Natural Resources departments of the Nez Perce and Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. Left messages for Keith Lawrence and Yvette Tuell.
- November 1, 2011. Keith Lawrence of the Nez Perce Tribe contacted us to let us know that the Natural Resources department was not interested in being involved in the CCP in any way. He suggested that we contact their Cultural Resources department.
- November 3, 2011. Contacted Pat Baird, archeologist for the Nez Perce Tribe, who said that they wanted to be notified of undertakings and that they wanted a hard copy of the draft and final CCP sent to the Nez Perce Tribe archeologist and the tribal chairman. These contacts were added to the mailing list.

H.1.2 Meetings and Communication with Federal, State, or Local Elected Officials and Federal, State, or Local Agencies

H.1.2.1 Interagency Coordination Team

- May 27, 2010. Letters requesting involvement on the CCP Interagency Coordinating Team (ICT) were sent to U.S. senators and representatives, State of Idaho senators and representatives within the Lake Lowell districts, the Governor of Idaho, Canyon County commissioners, the mayors of Caldwell and Nampa, Bureau of Reclamation, Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ), Canyon County Parks Recreation and Waterways (CCPRW), and the Boise Project Board of Control.
- ICT Meetings
 - July 1, 2010. Attendees included representatives of IDEQ, Bureau of Reclamation, Canyon County Parks, Recreation and Waterways (CCPRW), Canyon County Commissioners, Senator Crapo’s office, Canyon County District 13, and the City of Caldwell.
 - November 30, 2010. Attendees included representatives of the City of Nampa, State Representative Christy Perry’s office, Canyon County Commissioners, CCPRW, Bureau of Reclamation, and the City of Caldwell.

- May 27, 2011. Attendees included representatives of the City of Caldwell, IDEQ, Canyon County Commissioners, CCPRW, the offices of Senators Crapo and Risch, the office of Congressman Labrador, Canyon County Sheriff's office, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, IDFG, and the City of Greenleaf.
- ICT Updates
 - Updates were sent to the coordination team monthly. ICT updates were sent on August 2, 2010; September 9, 2010; October 8, 2010; November 10, 2010; January 12, 2011; February 22, 2011; March 21, 2011; May 4, 2011; June 9, 2011; July 27, 2011; August 30, 2011; September 29, 2011; October 25, 2011; November 30, 2011; December 22, 2011; February 6, 2012.
 - No ICT update was sent in December 2010, because of the meeting held at the end of November.
 - No ICT update was sent in April 2011. An update was sent in early May.
 - January 2012 update was sent the first week of February.
- Current Representatives on the ICT
 - Kathy Alder – Canyon County Commissioner
 - Tom Bicak – Director, CCPRW
 - Tom Dale – Mayor, City of Nampa
 - Joe Decker – Canyon County Public Information Officer
 - Paul Deveau – Project Manager, Boise Project Board of Control
 - Steve Dunn – Natural Resource Specialist, Bureau of Reclamation
 - Phil Hardy – Regional Director for Congressman Raul Labrador
 - Darrin Johnson – Director, Nampa Parks and Recreation
 - Dean Johnson – Lands Resource Supervisor, Idaho Department of Lands
 - Dustin Miller – Environmental Liaison for Governor Otter
 - Susan Miller – Executive Assistant to the Mayor of Caldwell
 - Lauri Monnot – Watershed Coordinator, IDEQ
 - Christy Perry – Representative for Canyon County District 13
 - Scott Reinecker – Regional Director, IDFG
 - John Revier – Deputy Chief of Staff for Congressman Simpson
 - Bryan Ricker – Regional Director for Senator Crapo
 - Mike Roach – Natural Resource Director for Senator Risch

H.1.2.2 Congressional Meetings/Tours (in addition to ICT involvement)

- May 27, 2010. Letters requesting involvement on the CCP ICT were sent to U.S. senators and representatives, State of Idaho senators and representatives within the Lake Lowell districts, the Governor of Idaho, Canyon County commissioners, the mayors of Caldwell and Nampa, Bureau of Reclamation, IDFG, Idaho DEQ, CCPRW, and the Boise Project Board of Control.
- May 26, 2011. Refuge Manager Jennifer Brown-Scott and Assistant Chief of Refuges Ben Harrison met with Senators Crapo and Risch, Congressman Simpson, and staff of Congressman Labrador in Washington D.C. to brief them on the preliminary draft alternatives.
- August 18, 2011. Refuge Manager Jennifer Brown-Scott, Chief of Refuges Robin West, Assistant Regional Director Richard Hannan, and Regional Director Robyn Thorson met with representatives of Senators Crapo and Risch and Congressmen Labrador and Simpson to

discuss public comment and future changes to the preliminary draft alternatives.

H.1.2.3 Presentations for State and County Agencies (in addition to ICT involvement)

- Sent out invitations in June 2010 for a presentation on August 3, 2010. No County employees responded.
- August 4, 2010. Held presentation for Idaho state agencies. Kurt Stieglitz, IDFG; Thomas Woolf, Idaho Department of Agriculture; Jim Vannoy, Idaho Department of Health and Welfare; and David Dahms, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation attended.
- August 11, 2010. Met with Idaho Department of Lands to discuss management authority.
- October 11, 2011. Met with IDFG and discussed public comments and potential changes to the preliminary draft alternatives.

H.1.3 Communication with the Public, Local Businesses, and Community Organizations

H.1.3.1 Presentations with Community/Business Organizations

- During scoping in summer 2010, we contacted over 40 nongovernmental organizations and State and county agencies to offer CCP question-and-answer sessions. We met with 23 groups, including the following:
 - June 10, 2010. Informational CCP presentation to Caldwell Kiwanis.
 - June 10, 2010. Informational CCP presentation to Southwest Idaho Birders Association.
 - June 16, 2010. Informational CCP presentation to Idaho Bass Federation Nation.
 - July 10, 2010. Brief speech at the Premier Bass Tournament weigh-in.
 - July 12, 2010. Informational CCP presentation to the board of Golden Eagle Audubon Society.
 - July 13, 2010. Informational CCP presentation to the Southern Idaho Sailing Association.
 - July 14, 2010. Informational CCP presentation to the Idaho-Oregon Snake River Water Trail Coalition.
 - July 20, 2010. Informational CCP presentation to the Southwest Irrigation District (SWID) Resource Conservation and Development.
 - July 21, 2010. Informational CCP presentation to the Friends of Deer Flat Refuge.
 - July 26, 2010. Informational CCP presentation to the Intermountain Jet Boat Association.
 - July 27, 2010. Informational CCP presentation to the Kiwanis Club.
 - August 4, 2010. Informational CCP presentation at the Boise Watershed Teacher Workshop.
 - August 9, 2010. Informational CCP presentation to the Western White Water Association.
 - August 10, 2010. Informational CCP presentation to the Idaho Waterfowl Association.
 - August 10, 2010. Brief presentation at the Caldwell Chamber of Commerce luncheon.
 - August 13, 2010. Speech to a floatplane club.
 - August 18, 2010. Informational CCP presentation to the Caldwell Rotary Club.

- August 23, 2010. Informational CCP presentation to the Snake River Canyon Scenic Byway.
 - August 26, 2010. Informational CCP presentation to the Nampa Association of Realtors.
 - August 31, 2010. Informational CCP presentation to the Caldwell Optimist Club.
- Two requests for CCP presentations were received in the winter of 2011. Presentations were provided to the following organizations.
 - February 14, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to the Woman's Century Club.
 - March 13, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to the Nampa Exchange Club.
- During the preliminary draft alternatives comment period in summer 2011, we contacted 70 nongovernmental organizations to offer CCP question-and-answer sessions. We met with 28 groups, including the following.
 - June 6, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to Idaho Power.
 - June 6, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to Snake River Bassmasters.
 - June 8, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to the Nampa Exchange Club.
 - June 9, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to the Caldwell Kiwanis Club.
 - June 9, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to the Lower Boise Watershed Council.
 - June 14, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to the Nampa Lions Club.
 - June 17, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to a local floatplane club.
 - June 21, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to the Ada County Association of Realtors.
 - June 21, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to the Caldwell Exchange Club.
 - June 21, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to Southwest Idaho Resource Conservation and Development.
 - June 22, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to the Caldwell Optimist Club.
 - June 22, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to the Caldwell Rotary Club.
 - June 28, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to the Treasure Valley Kiwanis Club.
 - June 28, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to the Nampa Rotary Club.
 - June 28, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to Lakeside Bassmasters.
 - June 29, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to the Sunrise Rotary.
 - June 30, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to Idaho Water Sports.
 - July 6, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to Idaho Waterfowl Association.
 - July 7, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to Bass Federation Nation.
 - July 11, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to Western Whitewater Association.
 - July 12, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to Golden Eagle Audubon Society.
 - July 13, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to the Caldwell Chamber of Commerce.
 - July 15, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to the Boise Sailors Association.
 - July 21, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to the Nampa Kiwanis Club.
 - July 21, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to Idaho Bass Federation.
 - July 23, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to the Idaho Recreation Council.
 - July 25, 2011. Informational CCP presentation to the Snake River Canyon Scenic Byway.

H.1.3.2 Public Open Houses/Scoping Sessions

- July 28, 2010. Open House from 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM at the Refuge Visitor Center.

- August 20, 2010. Open House from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM at the Refuge Visitor Center.
- August 21, 2010. Open House from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM at the Refuge Visitor Center.
- September 23-24, 2010. Work Session 1. Participation was by invitation. The work sessions were open to public viewing.
- September 24-25, 2010. Work Session 2. Participation was by invitation. The work sessions were open to public viewing.
- June 3, 2011. Open House from 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM and 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM at the Refuge Visitor Center.
- June 4, 2011. Open House from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM at the Refuge Visitor Center.
- July 8, 2011. Open House from 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM and 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM at the Refuge Visitor Center.
- July 9, 2011. Open House from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM at the Refuge Visitor Center.

H.1.3.3 Field Outreach

- June 26, 2010. Staff outreach at Upper Dam East.
- July 1, 2010. Staff outreach at Gotts Point and Lower Dam Recreation Area.
- July 10, 2010. Staff outreach at Gotts Point, the Lower Dam Recreation Area, and the Lavender Festival.
- July 11, 2010. Staff outreach at the Lavender Festival.
- July 22, 2010. Staff outreach at the Lower Dam Recreation Area.
- July 30, 2010. Staff outreach at the Lower Dam Recreation Area, the Upper Dam, and Gotts Point.
- August 8, 2010. Staff outreach at Access #7, Lower Dam Recreation Area, Upper Dam East, and Upper Dam West.
- August 14, 2010. Staff outreach at the Lower Dam Recreation Area.
- August 27, 2010. Staff outreach at the Upper Dam West, Upper Dam East, Lower Dam Recreation Area, and Gotts Point.
- June 25-26, 2011. Staff outreach at the Boise Recreation Festival.
- July 8-9, 2011. Staff outreach at the Lavender Festival.

H.1.3.4 CCP Hotline

- June 23, 2010. Available 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM
- July 14, 2010. Available 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM
- July 28, 2010. Available 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM
- August 11, 2010. Available 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM
- August 25, 2010. Available 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM
- September 8, 2010. Available 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

H.1.3.5 News Releases

The following CCP-related news releases were issued to over 100 statewide television, radio, and print media contacts.

- June 21, 2010. Announcement of start of CCP process and opportunities for comment.

- July 19, 2010. Announcement of upcoming open house about management plan.
- September 16, 2010. Announcement of CCP Work Sessions.
- December 28, 2010. Update on status of CCP planning and announcement of release of Planning Update #2.
- May 27, 2011. Announcement of comment period for preliminary draft alternatives.
- October 25, 2011. Update on status of CCP planning and announcement of release of Planning Update #4.

H.1.3.6 Press Coverage (April 1, 2010, to March 31, 2012)

- April 14, 2010. Idaho Press-Tribune, “Deer Flat Prepares to Update Conservation Guidelines.”
- May 02, 2010. Idaho Press-Tribune, “County Seeks Full Access to Popular Recreation Spot.”
- May 02, 2010. NWCN, “Some Residents Want Vehicle Ban Lifted on Lake Lowell Recreation Spot.”
- May 05, 2010. Idaho Press-Tribune, “Public Can Give Views on Lake Lowell Water.”
- May 13, 2010. Idaho Press-Tribune, “Find Way to Open Gates at Gotts Point.”
- June 16, 2010. Idaho Press-Tribune, “Lake Lowell Flush with Water.”
- June 21, 2010. Press release was sent to local press outlets informing the public of the start of public scoping and promoting the CCP hotline.
- June 21, 2010. Idaho Statesman, “Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge Kicks Off Comprehensive Planning Process, Wants Public Comment.”
- July 08, 2010. Idaho Press-Tribune, “Work begins on Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge Plan.”
- July 19, 2010. Press release was sent to local press outlets informing them of the July and August open houses.
- July 24, 2010. Idaho Press-Tribune, “Refuge Meeting Plan Set for Wednesday.”
- July 29, 2010. Idaho Press-Tribune, “Refuge Seeks to Save Water Sports.”
- August 10, 2010. KIVI-TV, “Boaters Beware in Lake Lowell.”
- August 10, 2010 KBOI AM 670, “Officials Urge Public Comment on Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge Plan.”
- August 11, 2010. Idaho Press-Tribune, “Help Save Recreation on Lake Lowell.”
- August 12, 2010. KTRV-TV, “Lake Lowell Activities Debate.”
- August 13, 2010. KIVI-TV, “Public to Weigh in on Lake Lowell Management Plan.”
- August 14, 2010. KBOI, Story about boating, open houses, and comments.
- August 14, 2010. KBOI 2, “Change ‘is coming’ to Lake Lowell, Boaters Fear Worst.”
- August 14, 2010. KTVB and NWCN, “Public Weighs in on Future of Boating at Lake Lowell.”
- August 15, 2010. KTVB, “Wildlife Refuge Could Curtail Water Sports on Popular Lake.”
- August 15, 2010. Idaho Press-Tribune, “Crowd Defends Lake Use.”
- August 17, 2010. Idaho Statesman online blog, “Boaters Gear Up for Fight at Lake Lowell.”
- August 24, 2010. KTRV-TV “Canyon County Commissioners Call on Citizens.”
- August 26, 2010. Idaho Press-Tribune, “‘Save Lake Lowell’ Meeting Today.”
- August 27, 2010. Idaho Press-Tribune, “‘Save Lake Lowell’ Group Meets.”
- August 29, 2010. Idaho Press-Tribune, Opinion, “Lake’s Uses Must Be Balanced.”

- August 31, 2010. Idaho Press-Tribune, editorial opinion, “Burden of Proof Should Fall on Closing Refuge.”
- August 31, 2010, KBOI AM 670, Sept. Lake Lowell Month to Save Recreation Activities on the Lake.”
- September 01, 2010. KTRV-TV, “Commissioners Worry About Losing Lake Lowell.”
- September 02, 2010. Idaho Press-Tribune, guest opinion, “We Must Honor Deer Flat’s Original Purpose.”
- September 02, 2010. Idaho Press-Tribune, “Officials Support Lowell Recreation.”
- September 03, 2010. Idaho Press-Tribune, “Lake Lowell Issue Continues Debate.”
- September 04, 2010. Idaho Press-Tribune, “Lowell Plan Shapes Future.”
- September 08, 2010. Idaho Press-Tribune, Deer Flat editorial opinion, “Wildlife, Recreation Can Co-exist.”
- September 08, 2010. Idaho Statesman, “Lake Lowell Recreation Supporters Rally to Influence Refuge Planning.”
- September 09, 2010. Idaho Press-Tribune, “Group Spearheads Opposition to Lake Restrictions.”
- September 10, 2010. KTVB, “Refuge Managers Receive Hundreds of Comments on Future of Lake Lowell.”
- September 11, 2010. Idaho Press-Tribune, “Simpson, Minnick Weigh in on Lake Lowell, Wolves.”
- September 12, 2010. Idaho State Journal, “Minnick, Simpson Send Letter Seeking Progress on Wolf Management, Lake Lowell Issues.”
- September 13, 2010. Northwest Cable News, “Refuge Managers Receive Hundreds of Comments on Future of Lake Lowell.”
- September 15, 2010. ONEARTH Magazine and KBOI, “A Gem in the Desert or Garbage Dump?”
- September 16, 2010. Press release was sent to local press outlets inviting the public to view the September Work Sessions.
- September 17, 2010. Idaho Press-Tribune, “Deer Flat to Host Use Plan Meetings.”
- September 21, 2010. Idaho Statesman, “Brainstorming Workshops Planned This Week for Deer Flat Conservation Plan.”
- September 23, 2010. KTRV, “Boating Ban among Ideas at Lake Lowell Brainstorming Session.”
- January 13, 2011. Idaho Press-Tribune, “Local Leaders Concerned about Deer Flat Outcome.”
- February 21, 2011. Idaho Press-Tribune, “Deer Flat Debate Escalates.”
- March 17, 2011. Idaho Press-Tribune, “Simpson Seeks Assurances on Lake Lowell.”
- April 13, 2011. KTVB, “Canyon County Wants More Control over Wildlife Refuge.”
- May 27, 2011. KTVB, “Proposed Changes to Lake Lowell.”
- May 28, 2011. Idaho Press-Tribune, “Four Options, One Lake.”
- May 28, 2011. Idaho Statesman, “Recreation Restrictions Loom for Lake Lowell.”
- May 29, 2011. Westport News.
- June 24, 2011. KTVB, “Idaho Leaders Want More Public Comments on Lake Lowell.”
- July, 2011. The Golden Eagle, “Comments Sought on Deer Flat Birding and New Management Plan Proposals.”

- July 07, 2011. KTVB and KIVI, “Embroided in Fight, Idaho Refuge Meets with Public.”
- July 09, 2011. KIVI, “The Day Recreation Died.”
- July 11, 2011. Capital Press, “Boat Parade Protests ‘Death of Recreation’.”
- July 21, 2011. Idaho Public Television, “Idaho’s Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge Plan Stirs Controversy.”
- July 22, 2011. KIVI, “Community Comes Together to Fight Government Take Over of Lake Lowell.”
- July 22, 2011. KTVB, “Canyon County Says Feds Have No Rights on Lake Lowell.”
- July 30, 2011. KTVB, “Otter Spars with Feds over Control of Lake Lowell.”
- August 25, 2011. Fox News, “Taking Liberties: Birds Vs. Boaters.”
- October 20, 2011. Idaho Public Television, “The People’s Land.”
- October 25, 2011. KTVB, “Updated Conservation Plan for Deer Flat Refuge Released.”
- February 2, 2012. Western Canyon Chronicle, “Jan 24th Presentation: Status of Wildlife Conservation Rulemaking for Lake Lowell.”
- March 10, 2012. Idaho Press-Tribune, “Lake Lowell Focus of Joint Memorial.”
- March 18, 2012. Idaho Press-Tribune, “Canyon County Sheriff Candidates Discuss Lake Lowell, Jail at Forum.”

H.1.3.7 Planning Updates

- July 15, 2010. Planning Update 1 was mailed to individuals on the CCP mailing list and adjacent landowners. Copies of the planning update were also available at the Visitor Center and made available at outreach events. Adjacent landowners in Malheur County were accidentally left off of the initial mailing. They received Planning Update 1 and Planning Update 2 in December. This planning update let the public know of the Refuge’s intent to begin a planning process, provided an overview of the CCP process, and requested public comment.
- November 29, 2010. Planning Update 2 was mailed to individuals on the CCP mailing list. Adjacent landowners not on the mailing list received postcards informing them of the availability of the planning update on the Refuge’s website. Copies of the planning update were also available at the Visitor Center and outreach events. This planning update provided an overview of comments received during the summer scoping period.
- May 27, 2011. Planning Update 3 was mailed to individuals on the CCP mailing list. Adjacent landowners not on the mailing list received postcards informing them of the availability of the planning update on the Refuge’s website. Copies of the planning update were also available at the Visitor Center and outreach events. This planning update provided an overview of preliminary draft alternatives and requested public comment.
- October 25, 2011. Planning Update 4 was mailed to individuals on the CCP mailing list. Adjacent landowners not on the mailing list received postcards informing them of the availability of the planning update on the Refuge’s website. Copies of the planning update were also available at the Visitor Center and outreach events. This planning update provided an overview of comments received after the release of the preliminary draft alternatives and explained some of the changes that would be made based on those comments.

H.1.3.8 Other Tools

- The Refuge website featured CCP information, Refuge fact sheets, frequently asked questions, and comment forms.
- CCP information flyers and outreach “business cards” were placed in over 40 local businesses.
- CCP informational “half sheets” and/or outreach “business cards” were handed out at every presentation and outreach event and were passed out during field outreach.
- Refuge and CCP fact sheets were created and made available at presentations and outreach events, and in the Visitor Center.
- The Refuge created CCP messages that played on the Headquarters/Visitor Center phone lines if someone was put on hold or called after business hours.
- Participated in Senator Crapo’s press conference at the Lower Dam Recreation Area on August 14, 2010.
- Article in the Southwest Idaho Birders Association July newsletter
- Article in the Idaho Bass Federation Nation spring newsletter
- Article in the Deer Flat NWR Volunteer newsletter

H.1.3.9 Federal Register Notices

- July 15, 2010. Federal Register published notice of intent to prepare a CCP/EIS and a request for comments.

H.1.3.10 Field Reviews

- June 16-19, 2008. Wildlife and Habitat Management Field Review on Refuge. Approximately 30 participants.
- September 9-11, 2008. Public Uses Field Review on Refuge. Approximately 25 participants.

H.2 Summary of Responses

More than 900 comments were received between the release of the Notice of Intent and Planning Update 1 and the release of the preliminary draft alternatives and Planning Update 3. And over 300 comments were received after the preliminary draft alternatives and Planning Update 3 were released to the public. These comments described concerns and provided suggestions for managing the Refuge. Comments were received by mail, email, phone, in person, and by fax. In addition to these comments, two petitions signed by a total of 669 people were received, as well as two form letters sent/signed by an additional 93 people.

Comment Delivery Types	
Email	870
Comment card	132
Letter	169
Meeting	5
Phone	31
Petition	2
Form letter	2

The majority of comments were received from Idaho; however, comments were also received from Arizona, California, Michigan, Nevada New Jersey, Vermont, Washington, and Wyoming. Each idea formulated in a comment was categorized into a theme and subtheme. Some comments included thoughts on several different topics, which were each categorized into their own theme and subtheme. Thoughts contained within comments fell into 29 themes and 68 subthemes; the number of individual ideas received within each theme is presented in Table 1. To view a list of categorized comments, please visit the Deer Flat Planning website at <http://www.fws.gov/deerflat/refugeplanning.html>.

H.3 Comment Content Summaries

H.3.1 Alternatives

Comments were received that supported or opposed the different alternatives. The ideas and concerns addressed by these comments are summarized under each individual theme below.

H.3.2 Refuge Access

H.3.2.1 Gotts Point

Comments received both requested that Gotts Point be reopened and pointed out the positive aspects to having the area closed to vehicles. Comments voiced concern that anglers are not physically able to walk to the point, requested access to Gotts Point for wind sports, asked for better disabled access, asked for improved law enforcement, and requested that the area be closed at night if it is reopened. Reasons for keeping Gotts Point closed included the reduction of trash and vandalism. Gotts Point was referred to as a favorite fishing spot, the best shoreline fishing spot, and a good spot for bank fishing. It was difficult to discern whether some of the commenters knew that Gotts Point is currently open to walkers.

H.3.2.2 Refuge Access

These comments included the desire for closed areas to be open, better access to the water's edge with stairs on every beach, and keeping gates open as much as possible.

H.3.2.3 Trails

Trails in new areas (including a trail around the entire lake), improved paths to the lake providing easier access for human-powered boats, and use of fire breaks as trails were suggested in some of the submitted comments. Some comments proposed the use of paths for walking, bicycling, horseback riding, and running, while others asked for jogging, dog-walking, and horseback riding to be restricted to roads. Some comments also suggested wildlife-dependent and nonwildlife-dependent uses be allowed on separate trails and that the trails be used to increase education. A bicycle trail around the entire Refuge was also suggested. The new trail proposals found in the action alternatives received mixed reviews. Comments were received that thought the boardwalk was both a good idea and overly ambitious, while only positive feedback was received about the trail in Murphy's Neck. There was also a request for a trail from Parking Lot 5.

H.3.3 Planning Process

Comments included discussion of priority and non-priority recreation definitions, the quality of scientific information, requests for extension of the comment period, and approval of the planning process.

H.3.4 Wildlife-dependent Recreation

H.3.4.1 Environmental Education

Most of these comments expressed support for environmental education. Some comments stated that recreational activities give them the opportunity to help their families learn about the environment. There was also support for the educational programs provided by the Refuge.

H.3.4.2 Fishing

In general, the comments expressed support for maintaining fishing opportunities on the Refuge. Comments involving access suggested more docks, more shoreline fishing access, easier access to shoreline fishing, and continuation of wading access. Concern was raised that fishing access would be reduced under some of the alternatives through an increase in closed areas and no-wake zones. A reduction of carp in Lake Lowell was requested by a few commenters. The Refuge received comments that both opposed and applauded the proposal of lead-free fishing tackle and barbless hooks. The Refuge also received comments that both requested the continuation of bass tournaments and asked for their removal.

H.3.4.3 Hunting

The Refuge received comments that opposed hunting on the Refuge, as well as comments that were in favor of maintaining or expanding hunting. The comments that opposed hunting on the Refuge cited the safety of nonhunters, disturbance to birds, and a belief that hunting should not be allowed on refuges as some of the reasons for this view. The comments requesting an expansion in the Refuge hunt were variable and included deer hunting, predator hunting, squirrel hunting, and goose hunting at Lake Lowell and turkey hunting on the Snake River Islands Unit.

Comments suggested specific hunting changes, including preventing sky busting and overcrowding, instituting a 25-shell daily limit per hunter, restricting the number of hunters in each access point, restricting waterfowl hunting to three to four days a week on Federal and State-owned waters, reopening of gates if ice thaws before the end of hunting season, and prohibition of electronic calling and decoys on Lake Lowell. And, there were some comments addressing Refuge-proposed hunting changes including not instituting a 25-shell daily limit per hunter and some disagreement over the creation of a permit system. Comments addressed the re-alignment of the hunt areas under the action alternatives (Alternatives 2 to 4). Comments against the re-alignment of the hunt areas stated that there has been no conflict between waterfowl and upland hunters to date, and a reduction in huntable area accessed by shore and re-alignment could increase crowding. If there is a conflict between different types of hunters, as was also stated, it was proposed that it be resolved by separation in time, instead of space. Comments also stated that upland hunting is better on the south side of the lake than in the Eastside Recreation Area.

There were several different ideas concerning deer hunting on the Refuge, including not hunting deer, providing a youth hunt, providing an archery season, hunting deer only if it is necessary for habitat management, and hunting deer to reduce depredation on neighboring lands.

H.3.4.4 Wildlife Observation

Comments discussed the enjoyment that people get from viewing the wildlife and landscapes of the Refuge and requested additional webcams.

H.3.5 Other Recreation

H.3.5.1 Boating

Comments requested that the Refuge continue to have boating and referenced recreational boating as a mode for fishing. There was concern that removing boating could negatively impact the economy of the surrounding area. The comments focusing on additional opportunities included the general request for more boating opportunities as well as the removal of the on-water curfew, the ability to use the canal for nonmotorized boats, and crew training and racing on the lake. Opening rentals for row boats, kayaks, and other nonmotorized watercraft was another idea provided to the Refuge.

H.3.5.2 Motorized Boating

Comments received covered the spectrum from continuing to allow motorized boating with no restrictions to removing all motorized boating from the lake. Some comments suggested that motorized boating should not be changed in any way from the status quo, while others mentioned limitations to boating, including hours of use, motor size, months of use, increased no-wake zone, speed limits, allowing boating in the West Pool only, lake zoning, emissions requirements, shorter boating season, limits on numbers, use of only electric motors, and an enforced decibel level. Some comments voiced the opposite view—they did not want horsepower limits, time restrictions, or seasonal restrictions. Some other ideas that were received in response to the proposed alternatives included a wave elimination device or staggered dike system along the shoreline, limits on speed, smaller no-wake zones, a larger no-wake zone in the East Pool than that in the status quo, seasonal closures only around nesting sites and sensitive areas, permanent no-wake zones adjacent to emergent vegetation, the use of electric motors in sensitive areas, allowing water sports only (no fishing) in the West Pool, reduction or elimination of power boats, allowing nonmotorized boats on the lake year-round, and prohibiting two-stroke motors. It was also suggested that boating as a mode of transportation for sport fishing be managed separately from other types of boating. The elimination of personal water craft, sport boating, motorized boats, and/or large boats from some or all of the lake were also proposed. The Refuge also received comments that thought the wildlife populations and recreational boating current co-exist, while others felt that some motorized boating activities are not compatible with enhancing wildlife. Comments raised the concern that restricting high-speed boating to the West Pool may increase safety issues.

Comments were received that expressed an understanding of the need to protect habitats and wildlife, and reduce negative effects to wildlife-dependent users. Some thought the proposed alternatives met this need, some thought the restrictions on boating did not go far enough, and others thought that the restrictions proposed in Alternative 3 were too drastic.

Some of the questions that were raised included: Is the impact of wakes important when the lake is subject to high wind events and do high-speed boats affect grebes if they are not in or very near the smartweed?

H.3.5.3 Nonmotorized Boating

Comments varied from suggestions to allow only nonmotorized boats on the lake to not allowing anyone but high-speed users in the West Pool. Comments also provided these additional thoughts: increase sailing regattas, nonmotorized vessels have little or no effect on wildlife, open the lake to nonmotorized boating year-round, no-wake zones make nonmotorized use more enjoyable, provide secure canoe racks and a canoe launch, allow nonmotorized craft along the shoreline east of Parking Lot 1 (at least after July 1), allow rowing team races, and allow wind sports from Gotts Point, the Upper Dam boat launch, or Parking Lot 3.

H.3.5.4 Other Non-priority Public Uses

Some comments were received that asked the Refuge to remain a multiuse facility, not to close the Refuge to recreational uses, to reclassify the Refuge as a Recreation Area, to maintain its public uses in their current state, to allow swimming (including expanded swimming areas), dogs, horses, and/or bicycles, to allow new uses like kite flying, trapping, and remote control vehicle access, to allow lake use year-round, and to allow cross-country team practice. Other comments advocated for on-trail only use during nesting season, increased restrictions such as elimination of motors, radios, and cell phones, and the removal/banning of dogs, trapping, and some other uses all together. Some concerns addressed in comments included the economic impacts of any changes, the increased impacts to other reservoirs, lack of water for launching boats in the West Pool, and potential reduction in the ability for families to spend time together. Other comments suggested that proposed changes would negatively impact the local community. Some comments proposed that wildlife and humans are co-existing currently, that a human-made reservoir cannot be a national wildlife refuge, and that user access should be based on money spent in the community. Others thought that since Lake Lowell is part of a national wildlife refuge, it should be managed better for wildlife or only for wildlife and irrigation. Some comments questioned how dogs, bikes, or horses could be more disturbing than motor boats.

Some ideas on how to provide for wildlife, wildlife-dependent recreation, and nonwildlife-dependent recreational uses included implementation of no-wake zones, seasonal closures, partitioning uses, and implementation of a permit based on completion of an environmental education program. The Refuge heard both positive and negative comments about fee implementation.

There seemed to be some confusion over the uses allowed under the action alternatives, as some commenters were concerned that all recreational uses would be removed from Lake Lowell.

H.3.6 Habitat Management

H.3.6.1 Grain Farming

These comments wanted to see wildlife-friendly crops planted on the Refuge. Reasons given were to provide a wildlife food source, provide areas for sportsmen to hunt, and take over areas that are currently weeds. There was a question asked about future crop management and meeting wildlife goals.

H.3.6.2 Off-refuge Issues

Comments suggested that future development around the Refuge be restricted and proposed the use of a buffer zone adjacent to the Refuge's boundary. Concern was voiced over the loss of wildlife feeding habitat adjacent to both units of the Refuge.

H.3.6.3 Predator Management

Comments voiced concern over the predation levels on the Snake River Islands Unit, requested a predator management plan involving public participation, and requested access to the Refuge at night for predator control.

H.3.6.4 Water Issues

Comments showed concern over reduced water quality due to agricultural return flows and gas-powered motors, invasive aquatic species, and the use of herbicides; proposed water quality testing; and discussed the need to improve the water quality of Lake Lowell. There were also comments that showed concern over the preservation of water rights and how water levels, both in Lake Lowell and in the Snake River, affect wildlife.

H.3.6.5 Wildlife/Habitat Management

Comments discussed the need to manage noxious and invasive weeds on both Refuge units. The use of goats, prescribed fire, and cattle were some of the suggestions offered to provide weed control. It was also suggested that desirable nonnative plants be used for management along with native plants.

The comments regarding wildlife and habitat management were varied. They ranged from positive comments about Refuge wildlife to the sentiment that the Refuge has been neglected for several years. Suggestions for habitat management included removal of dead trees and brush, creation of pheasant habitat, planting trees for eventual timber harvest, use of prescribed fire, increasing cattle grazing, wildfire suppression and rehabilitation of burned areas, planting of "wildlife friendly" plants, and keeping Lake Lowell full in the fall. Some comments that were received questioned the amount of impact that uses have had on wildlife and pointed out the need for data collection on many topics.

H.3.7 Refuge Administration

H.3.7.1 Refuge Administration

Comments concerning Refuge administration ranged from positive comments about Refuge management and requests that the Refuge be managed as a wildlife refuge (wildlife first), to comments that pointed out a general lack of management, voiced general opposition to the Federal government, and requested that the Refuge be removed from its ownership. There seemed to be some confusion over current and past ownership of Lake Lowell, with some comments assuming that involvement in the area by the Federal government was a recent occurrence. Some comments wanted to remind the Refuge that the lake was created for irrigation, while others questioned the jurisdiction of the Refuge to manage public uses or mistakenly thought that the lake had a recreation purpose. Other comments pointed out the importance of local research and data collection, requested

additional land acquisition, and questioned where funding would come from for any additional administration.

H.3.8 General Visitor Experience

H.3.8.1 Visitor Experience

These comments expressed visitors' enjoyment of the Refuge because it is a place to recreate close to home and mostly reflected a positive visitor experience.

H.3.8.2 Visitor Facilities

Comments requested more parking, overnight facilities, better maintained bathrooms and dumpsters, better boat ramps, and better facilities for the disabled public. Some comments expressed a positive view of Refuge facilities.

H.3.8.3 Visitor Services

These comments included approval of the visitor center and requests for more welcome and orientation information.

H.3.9 Other

H.3.9.1 Collaboration

These comments focused on partnering with Canyon County, local colleges, and other non-profit organizations to patrol and clean up the Refuge.

H.3.9.2 Law Enforcement

These comments asked for more enforcement of hunting, vandalism, littering, fighting and public drunkenness, underage drinking, and night use laws and regulations. There was also concern raised over the ability to enforce the proposed no-wake zones, permit program for hunting, hunting safety zones, off-leash dogs, and other rules. Hiring additional law enforcement, security patrols, agreements with other law enforcement agencies, and gates that close at dark were suggested as solutions. The question of jurisdiction over fishing regulations and recreational activities was also raised.

H.3.9.3 Miscellaneous

These comments included an overall observation of wildlife and habitat of the Refuge, support for the local mosquito abatement district, and a request to have the lake open one month earlier and close one month later.

H.3.9.4 Public Safety and Health

Comments pointed out concerns over littering, dumping, and *Escherichia coli*; the need for an emergency phone or life guard at the swimming areas; and concerns over interactions with dogs. There were also requests to ban alcohol at the Refuge and to clean up the Refuge to keep fires to a minimum.

H.4 Major Issues

H.4.1 Issues Within the Scope of the CCP/EIS

The following major issues were identified from the comments received. These are not the only issues addressed in the CCP, but represent some of the larger, more complex questions that are examined.

Threats to Refuge Resources: What actions should the Service take to reduce threats to Refuge wildlife and habitats such as human disturbance to wildlife, invasive species, global climate change, and degradation of water quality? Many of these threats are much larger in scope than just the Refuge. They will be addressed at various scales depending on available information and what is most appropriate and relevant to the Refuge.

Habitat Restoration: What wildlife species and habitats should be the focus of Refuge management?

Wildlife: What can be done to reduce disturbance to feeding, nesting, and resting areas used by wildlife?

Research: What kind of surveys and studies will the Refuge need to inform future management?

Public Uses: What uses are compatible and appropriate at Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge? How can the Refuge provide the best wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities possible without negatively impacting wildlife or Refuge habitat? Which nonwildlife-dependent uses can the Refuge provide without negatively impacting wildlife-dependent users, wildlife, or Refuge habitat? What should the Service do to enhance public enjoyment, understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of Refuge resources? What can the Refuge do to improve the safety and quality of Refuge hunt programs?

Refuge Administration: What partnerships can be formed to increase public awareness of the Refuge, management of public use programs, and management of Refuge habitat and wildlife resources? How can the Refuge provide increased safety for Refuge visitors and enforcement of Refuge regulations? Should the Refuge institute a fee to fund increased facility management, public use programming, and/or law enforcement?

Facilities: What structures and facilities are needed for Refuge administration and to improve public use opportunities, and are there opportunities to remove other structures to enhance habitat conditions?

H.4.2 Issues Outside the Scope of the CCP/EIS

The issues listed below were found to be outside the scope of the CCP/EIS.

Deer Hunting: A new Lake Lowell Unit deer hunt was addressed in a recent environmental assessment (USFWS 2011a) and hunt package. The hunt was approved in September 2012 and began in October 2012. Because impacts of the Lake Lowell deer hunt were so recently assessed, the Lake Lowell deer hunt is outside of the scope of the CCP.

Development: Development that reduces habitat, impacts wildlife, or increases pollution outside of the Refuge borders could impact the wildlife and habitats of the Refuge. The CCP may discuss partnering with local entities to identify areas of concern for future development, but the Refuge will not be attempting to restrict or direct future county or city development within the CCP. Managing development outside the Refuge's boundary is within the management control of city and county governments, not within the management control of the USFWS.

Fisheries Management: Service policy requires us to develop a fisheries management plan. The plan will be developed in close coordination with IDFG.

Lake Lowell water levels: The Refuge received comments expressing concern that using the water in Lake Lowell to meet biological goals and objectives would reduce the amount of water available to local irrigators. The Refuge is an overlay refuge on a Reclamation reservoir, and Reclamation has primary jurisdiction over the manipulation of water levels of Lake Lowell. The executive order that established Deer Flat NWR states the Refuge does not have the legal authority to manipulate water levels.

Reclamation Zone Activities: The Reclamation Zones are located to the west of the Lower Dam and to the north of the Upper Dam. These areas are within the boundary of the Refuge but are legally managed by Reclamation. Management of all activities in these areas is outside the scope of the CCP.

Refuge Boundary: No modifications to the Refuge boundary were considered or are proposed in this Draft CCP/EIS. Individual boundary issues are researched as issues arise.

Restructuring of Priority and Nonpriority Recreational Activities: Because the concept of priority/nonpriority and wildlife-dependent/nonwildlife-dependent activities are found in the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended, and are a matter of law, making changes to these categories is not within the scope of the CCP.

Snake River boating: The Snake River is considered navigable waters and is not managed by the Service. This issue is not within the jurisdiction of Deer Flat NWR, and therefore it is outside the scope of the CCP.

Snake River Water Flows: Water levels in both the Snake River and Lake Lowell are outside the management control of the USFWS.

Water Quality Control: Although water quality is extremely important to the health of the wildlife and habitats of Deer Flat NWR, many of the forces influencing water quality are not within the management control of the USFWS. Refuge staff may partner with other agencies to create solutions to the water quality problem and assist in implementation of the total maximum daily load plan proposed by the Department of Environmental Quality.